

What is claimed is:

1 1. A method for use in a conference arrangement comprising the steps of:
2 enabling a plurality of participants in a group to participant in an ongoing
3 conference;
4 automatically collecting participation information of each of said participants in
5 said group;
6 automatically determining which of said participants in said group are currently
7 active in said conference; and
8 dynamically displaying a visual representation indicating which of said
9 participants in said group are active in said conference.

1 2. The method as defined in claim 1 further including a step of enabling
2 participants of said group not currently active in said conference to monitor said
3 conference.

1 3. The method as defined in claim 2 further including a step of enabling said
2 participants monitoring said conference to become active in said conference.

1 4. The method as defined in claim 2 further including a step of enabling said
2 participants monitoring said conference to listen to said conference.

1 5. The method as defined in claim 1 further including a step of automatically
2 collecting information on devices connecting to participants to said conference and
3 wherein said step of dynamically displaying displays said device information to all of
4 said participants.

1 6. The method as defined in claim 1 further including a step of automatically
2 collecting information on whether said active participants have spoken in said
3 conference.

1 7. The method as defined in claim 1 further including a step of automatically
2 collecting information regarding prior conference participation of each of said
3 participants.

1 8. The method as defined in claim 7 wherein said prior participation information
2 includes at least whether a participant was active in the conference.

1 9. The method as defined in claim 8 wherein said prior participation information
2 further includes whether a participant spoke in the conference.

1 10. The method as defined in claim 7 wherein said step of collecting participation
2 information includes a step of collecting information on whether a participant has been
3 active and/or an actual speaker in the conference during the conference.

1 11. The method as defined in claim 11 wherein said step of collecting
2 participation information further includes a step of collecting said participation
3 information for prescribed intervals of said conference.

1 12. The method as defined in claim 11 wherein said prescribed intervals include
2 at least each day of the conference interval, each hour of each said day, each minute of
3 each of said hours and each second of each of said minutes.

1 13. Apparatus for use in a conference arrangement comprising:
2 a set up unit to enable a plurality of participants in a group to participant in an
3 ongoing conference;

4 an information collection unit to automatically collect participation information of
5 each of said participants in said group and to automatically determine which of said
6 participants in said group are currently active in said conference; and

7 a display unit to dynamically display a visual representation indicating which of
8 said participants in said group are active in said conference.

1 14. The apparatus as defined in claim 13 wherein said set up unit further enables
2 participants of said group not currently active in said conference to monitor said
3 conference.

1 15. The apparatus as defined in claim 14 wherein said set up unit further enables
2 said participants monitoring said conference to become active in said conference.

1 16. The apparatus as defined in claim 14 wherein said set up unit further enables
2 said participants monitoring said conference to listen to said conference.

1 17. The apparatus as defined in claim 13 wherein said information collection unit
2 further automatically collects information on devices connecting to participants to said
3 conference and wherein said step of dynamically displaying displays said device
4 information to all of said participants.

1 18. The apparatus as defined in claim 13 wherein said information collection unit
2 further automatically collects information on whether said active participants have
3 spoken in said conference.

1 19. The apparatus as defined in claim 18 wherein said information collection unit
2 further automatically collects information regarding prior conference participation of
3 each of said participants.

1 20. The apparatus as defined in claim 19 wherein said prior participation
2 information includes at least whether a participant was active in the conference.

1 21. The apparatus as defined in claim 20 wherein said prior participation
2 information further includes whether a participant spoke in the conference.

1 22. The apparatus as defined in claim 21 wherein said information collection unit
2 further automatically collects information on whether a participant has been active and/or
3 an actual speaker in the conference during the conference.

1 23. The apparatus as defined in claim 22 wherein said information collection unit
2 further automatically collects said participation information for prescribed intervals of
3 said conference.

1 24. The apparatus as defined in claim 22 wherein said prescribed intervals
2 include at least each day of the conference interval, each hour of each said day, each
3 minute of each of said hours and each second of each of said minutes.

1 25. Apparatus for use in a conference arrangement comprising:
2 means for enabling a plurality of participants in a group to participant in an
3 ongoing conference;
4 means for automatically collecting participation information of each of said
5 participants in said group;
6 means for automatically determining which of said participants in said group are
7 currently active in said conference; and
8 means for dynamically displaying a visual representation indicating which of said
9 participants in said group are active in said conference.

1 26. The apparatus as defined in claim 25 further including means for enabling
2 participants of said group not currently active in said conference to monitor said
3 conference.

1 27. The apparatus as defined in claim 25 further including means for
2 automatically collecting information regarding prior conference participation of each of
3 said participants.

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